



# Accelerate digital inclusion by addressing key barriers to mobile internet adoption and use

Mobile internet connectivity delivers significant economic benefits, reduces poverty and transforms lives, providing people with access to information and services that not only assists them in their daily lives but that they would not have had access to otherwise. However, globally more than **3.7 billion** people remain unconnected, with **3.4 billion** people living in areas covered by mobile broadband networks but who are unable or unwilling to use it.<sup>1</sup> The unconnected are disproportionately poorer, less educated, female, persons with disabilities<sup>2</sup> and rural, with **234 million** fewer women than men using mobile internet in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup>

The GSMA is supporting a number of initiatives to address this challenge and help ensure no one is being left behind in an increasingly connected world, with funding from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and support from its members.

The approach has been to focus on the unconnected and tackle key barriers to mobile internet adoption and use in order to drive increased digital inclusion and realise the benefits that mobile internet connectivity provides.

<sup>1</sup> GSMA (2021), [The State of Mobile Connectivity Report 2021](#)

<sup>2</sup> GSMA (2021), [The Mobile Disability Gap Report 2021](#)

<sup>3</sup> GSMA (2021), [The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2021](#)



## Example of tackling a barrier to drive increased mobile internet adoption and use







### Mobile Internet Skills Training Toolkit (MISTT)

A set of resources to teach people the basic skills they need to access and use mobile Internet to meet their needs.






Deployed in **27 countries** to date and used to train over **50 million** people.

Driving increased digital inclusion

### Increased Mobile Internet Access

-  **Bangladesh:** Of those who had not used data in their Banglalink SIM before, **42%** started using mobile internet during the pilot phase
-  **Benin:** Total active data subscribers increased by over **300,000**; a **24%** increase
-  **Rwanda:** MISTT trained sales agents managed to increase the number of new data subscribers by **15%**
-  **Sierra Leone:** Orange onboarded **175,000** new data customers following the MISTT campaign

### Increased Mobile Internet Use

-  **Bangladesh:** Mobile internet use increased by **228%** among trained users
-  **Benin:** Average customer's data use increased **427%**
-  **Cameroon:** Average customer's data use increased **231%**
-  **Rwanda:** **77%** of MISTT trained customers increased their data usage, with **31%** increasing their data use by **100-500%**
-  **Sierra Leone:** Orange trained customers' average data use increased by **217%** in comparison to non-trained customers



# Research highlights that increasing mobile internet access and use delivers significant socio-economic benefits:



## GDP growth



- An increase of **10%** in mobile broadband penetration leads to **1.5%** GDP growth.<sup>4</sup>
- Closing the gender gap in mobile internet use across LMICs could add \$700 billion in GDP growth over a five-year period, representing an additional **0.7%** of GDP growth.<sup>5</sup>

## Poverty reduction



- A study in Nigeria showed that expanding mobile broadband coverage can reduce extreme poverty with the proportion of households in extreme poverty decreasing by **4%** after 1 year of coverage and **7%** after **2 years of coverage**.<sup>6</sup>
- A study in Tanzania showed that mobile broadband coverage increases household consumption by 7% and decreases poverty by **5 percentage points**, mainly driven by positive impacts on labour market outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

## Improving lives



- Mobile internet is associated with higher levels of wellbeing among men and women.<sup>8</sup>
- Mobile makes people feel safer and provides access to important information that not only assists them in their daily lives (e.g. day-to-day work, studies and household chores), but that they would not have received otherwise. Benefits are considerably greater for those who use mobile internet.<sup>9</sup>

4 ITU (2020) [How broadband, digitization and ICT regulation impact the global economy](#)

5 GSMA (2019) [The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2019](#)

6 World Bank, GSMA (2019) [The poverty reduction effects of mobile broadband in Africa: Evidence from Nigeria](#)

7 World Bank, GSMA (2021) [Mobile Broadband Internet, Poverty and Labor Outcomes in Tanzania](#)

8 GSMA (2019) [The Impact of Mobile and Internet Technology on Women's Wellbeing Around the World](#);

GSMA (2022) [Mobile Internet Use, Well-being and Gender: Understanding the Links](#)

9 GSMA (2020) [The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020](#)



# Connected Women Life Stories

Hear women share their stories of how mobile is transforming their lives.



“The impact of mobile is huge. It has the power to change the world, connect the world. The world is in your hands if you have a mobile.”

**Kavita** ↗

Student, India

“Here in the rural areas, without internet you’re cut off from the modern world. Access to internet has really helped me as a farmer.”

**Fridah** ↗

Farmer, Kenya



“COVID-19 has been a great challenge for us... we were not able to open our shops... we had old stock which mostly we would sell online. We normally post them on Facebook. That is where we get customers’ feedback and we communicate with our customers.”

**Aletcenter** ↗

Bicycle shop owner, Kenya

“With the existence of mobile internet, it makes it easier for us to still be able to learn even from home. It makes it easy for us to be able to communicate with teachers.”

**Sindy** ↗

Student, Indonesia



“COVID-19 affected our businesses very badly... but mobile services were really a great help for me because I was able to do my business from my house.”

**Ruwigika** ↗

Food vendor, Sri Lanka

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